THE BUMBLE BEE

Vol. 4, No. 8

NOVEMBER, 1949

Columbia River Packers Association, Inc., Astoria, Oregon

EDITORIAL

River Blockade

The Columbia River salmon resource will pass through a critical period during the time the contractors in charge of building McNary Dam will have a large portion of the river blockaded by cofferdams. During Bonneville Dam construction cofferdams barred the movement of salmon trying to go upriver for many months. The result was the first complete failure experienced in the history of the river fishing industry when the offspring of that cycle returned to the river in 1943. The case pack that year dropped from a 40-year average of over 300,000 cases to 167,000 cases.

Fortunately in the current instance the Army Engineers in charge of McNary construction are cooperating with state fishery authorities and industry representatives in an attempt to solve this problem. Plans for passage of fish during this critical period have been worked out. Unfortunately the efficiency of this program cannot be tested in advance. Blueprints may prove satisfactory to the experts but the salmon won't look at them. At any rate the die is cast and it is now up to King Chinook to work out his salvation.

Help Not Heal

One of the current problems of the Columbia River salmon fishery is the "Lower River Plan" as outlined by the U.S. Engineer Corps in its program of development of the Columbia River Basin.

This plan involves the proposal to expend approximately $20,000,000 on tributaries entering the Columbia River below the site of the McNary Dam. The money will be used for stream clearance, the removal of natural and other obstacles to the passage of salmon, and for the erection of hatcheries and holding ponds. It is estimated that present runs of salmon on these streams can be greatly increased and that runs can be established in some, where salmon do not exist at the present time.

Improved salmon propagation methods and studies on the Fraser River and other streams indicate that there is a distinct possibility of success in the plan. However, it should be realized that this form of development brings returns only in the long run. A run of salmon can be built up, but the building up process for each cycle can only occur every four years when these anadromous fishes return to their parent streams.

The Columbia River fishing industry strongly approves this program and believes that it is a "must" if the resource is to be preserved to an extent that a commercial fishery can exist.

However it should be realized that while this program will be extremely helpful in maintaining the resource, the industry cannot agree with the concept that it will take the place of the spawning areas that will be blocked off or drowned out by the construction of the many dams proposed for erection across the main threads of the Columbia and Snake Rivers.

The industry feels that the results of this proposed program when achieved should be considered only moderate reparation for the damage already done to the resource by government built dams which have cut off thousands of miles of good salmon spawning area and destroyed many races of salmon which were once abundant in the river.

At the present time biologists are agreed that the principal remaining spawning areas which produce the bulk of the Columbia River salmon are stretches of the Snake River in the vicinity of Hells Canyon and the Columbia River between Priest Rapids and Rock Island Dam. These areas will be eliminated under the presently proposed program. The four lower Snake dams now authorized will destroy the spawning grounds in the vicinity of Hells Canyon and the proposed Priest Rapids Dam will completely flood out the spawning grounds in that area.

It cannot be conceived that the proposed development and rehabilitation of the few tributary areas to the Columbia below McNary can produce salmon runs that will replace those destroyed if these great spawning areas are eliminated. There just isn't enough room, enough water, and enough food. Little fish must eat and each requires just so much feeding area. When more salmon are spawned in any area, than the food supply will support, thousands must die until the proper balance is restored. Many areas which have the appearance of wonderful spawning grounds will not support fish simply because there is no supply of natural food. Already the demands of commercial fish and game hatcheries are over and above the supply of suitable food that can be supplied them.

In other words the "Lower River Plan" will be of great help and assistance in curtailing the losses occasioned by dams, but it cannot suffice to save the salmon resource as we know it today, if the great upriver spawning areas are lost through blockade or submersion in deep water.

COVER PAGE

Our cover page for this issue shows Skipper Nils Fastad of the MV Brisk holding two albacore tuna taken from the waters of the Pacific off the Oregon Coast during the recent tuna fishing season. These prize fish of the tuna family are white meated. When they pass along the Northwest Coast they are comparatively young fish and weigh on an average between 13 and 14 pounds. Albacore do not reach their maturity in the waters off the Americas. Prior to spawning they will average 25 pounds or better. Their spawning grounds are somewhere in the mid-Pacific Ocean, their exact location still one of Nature's secrets.

THE BUMBLE BEE

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ASTORIA REPORTERS

Elmore Tuna.....Marjorie Waissanen
Elmore Salmon.....Burdette Yexley
Cold Storage.....Dorothy Peterson
Shipyard.....Ada Koshay
Boatyard and Launches.....Johan Peterson
Scandinavian.....Arvid North
George & Barker.....Peter Welch
Occident.....Al Paldanius
Alaska Office.....Herman Geissel
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Cushman.....George Ready
Newport.....Anita Schnieder
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Ellsworth.....Gerald Curran
St. Helens.....Oscar Gerard
Clifton.....Jalmer Thompson
North Shore.....Marvin Lee
Bay Center.....Jim Anderson
Bellingham.....James Doran

STAFF PHOTOGRAPHER..Ned Thorndike

COLUMBIA RIVER SALMON PACK SHORT

A round up of catch figures for the current salmon fishing season on the Columbia River, made after major fishing operations for the year were over, and with the legal season ending in a few weeks indicates that the salmon take, as a whole, was at least 30 per cent under that of 1948.

Both the spring and fall salmon runs were short, with the fall run far below that of the preceding year. Bonneville fish counts during September, the big fall month indicate that only 138,000 salmon passed the dam fish ladders during that month, about 60 per cent of the 10-year average for the same period.

The slack catch was felt both in and out of the river. The ocean trolling season was a failure. Despite the light catch by trollers the river catch of silvers was far below the average.

No particular reasons were advanced to account for the slack fish movement. Oregon Fish Commission officials said that the light fall run was predicated on a light escapement of the cycle on its previous entrance to the river, but the drop in the take of silversides, steelhead, and chum salmon was apparently one of the unexplained vagaries of Nature. A fishermen's strike starting in July and extending until early August had only a nominal effect on production as the catch is normally light during that period and experimental catches by the Fish Commission did not indicate the presence of any large amount of fish in the river.

On the whole fishery operations in the vicinity of the Columbia River were below average. The shad take was about the only item to show an increase over 1948 figures and even that was under average. The 1948 shad take was drastically cut by the big floods in the spring of that year.

Crab catches for the year were about 25 per cent below those of 1948 and sturgeon production was down some 40 per cent.

Trawl fish production of sole and rock cod was extremely light. Inability of fishermen and processors to reach any agreement on price affected operations throughout the year. Importations of fillets into this country from low wage and low cost areas cut the market price to a point where competition from this area was almost eliminated.

Salmon—Our Heritage

T. F. Sandoz, CRPA Executive Vice-President, addressed the Bellingham Chamber of Commerce early in November on the topic "Salmon—Our Heritage." He stressed the value of the salmon runs that entered the rivers and bays of the Pacific Northwest and urged that they be protected and preserved from over exploitation, and depletion by pollution, dams, and other man created perils.

CANWARD THEY GO

Tons of Royal Chinook salmon from the Columbia River on the floor of CRPA's Elmore Cannery. In a few hours these fish were hermetically sealed in tin cans and on their way to the cannery's big retorts for the cooking process.

ALBACORE TUNA SEASON NEARS END

The Pacific Northwest albacore season had about closed by the end of October. A few deliveries were coming from off the California coast but these had dropped to a very minor volume.

The season had had many peculiar features, one of them the small amount of albacore produced from waters off the mouth of the Columbia River and southward as far as Newport, Oregon. Major production started about 200 miles off the coast north of Grays Harbor. After a two weeks period the fish began shifting southward and the next concentrations were encountered south of Coos Bay off Cape Blanco. Heavy production did not continue for long in that area and during the latter part of September and October practically all receipts to Oregon canneries were coming from off the coast of California in the vicinity of Monterey.

In general the fish did not approach the coastline as closely as during former years with the result that production from small Northwest salmon trollers, generally fairly heavy during the jigging operations early in the season, was almost entirely lacking as these boats could not reach the tuna schools.

Some tuna were taken off the coast of southern Alaska but most of these boats delivered to Neah Bay rather than Ketchikan.

Estimates of the total Northwest tuna pack were difficult to make at press time for this issue owing to the scattered nature of the deliveries but it is believed that the total pack will be under that of 1948.

Another peculiar feature of the season was the smallness of the fish caught. Fishermen state that the average weight of the fish taken was probably from one to two pounds under that for the past several years. Albacore tuna caught off the Northwest and California Coast are believed to be considerably younger than those taken in the South Pacific waters, and, in areas generally fished by Japanese fishermen. These fish are often double the weight of the average taken off our coasts.

No further albacore packing is expected on the coast until late July.

FISHERMEN'S LUCK – SOMETIMES BAD

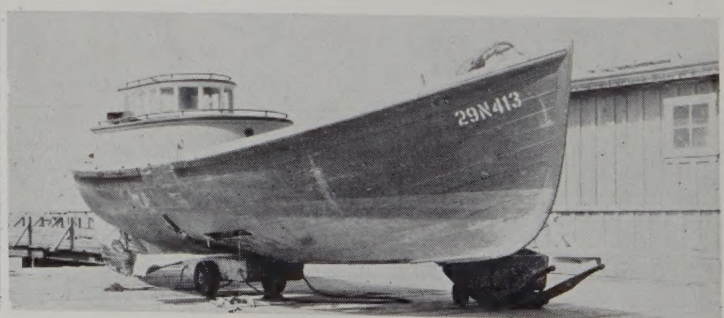
Commercial fishing is not an uneventful means of livelihood. Winds, waves, fogs, fires, and other perils, beset the fisherman while plying his trade. Modern navigation methods and instruments, and improved rescue techniques used by the U. S. Coast Guard have resulted in a drop in losses to life and property. Pictured here are three fishing boats operated in the Columbia River area which met disaster in three different ways during the month of August this year. Two of the boats were a total loss while the third is now in operation again. No lives were lost although two men suffered injuries in one of the events.

At the top right is pictured the troller Rickey which was anchored off the north jetty of the Columbia River. An unusually strong current developed during the night while the crewmen were sleeping and the boat drifted into the surf. The sea was calm and the men on board waded ashore without difficulty but the boat pounded on the hard sand until it split open like a ripe pumpkin. It was dragged ashore later and brought to Astoria only to make a final rendezvous with the junkman.

Bottom left shows a gillnet boat operated by Antone Stanich, experienced Columbia River gillnetter. One of those sudden gasoline explosions which cause tragedies from time to time on boats driven by gas engines ripped the craft apart and burned most of the hull. Stanich and his boat puller sustained severe but not dangerous burns. The boat was a total loss.

The craft pictured at lower right is another Columbia River gillnetter. This boat while fishing off Astoria was run down by a big trans-river ferry. The boatpuller Ivan Ihander jumped but the boat and skipper Walter Nelson went completely under the ferry. Ihander was pulled aboard the ferry and Nelson was rescued by another gillnetter. The swamped craft was caught in a drifting net and towed to an anchorage and later was towed ashore and beached by the U. S. Coast Guard. Strangely enough it was not badly damaged.

Fishermen's luck is fickle—and unexpected.



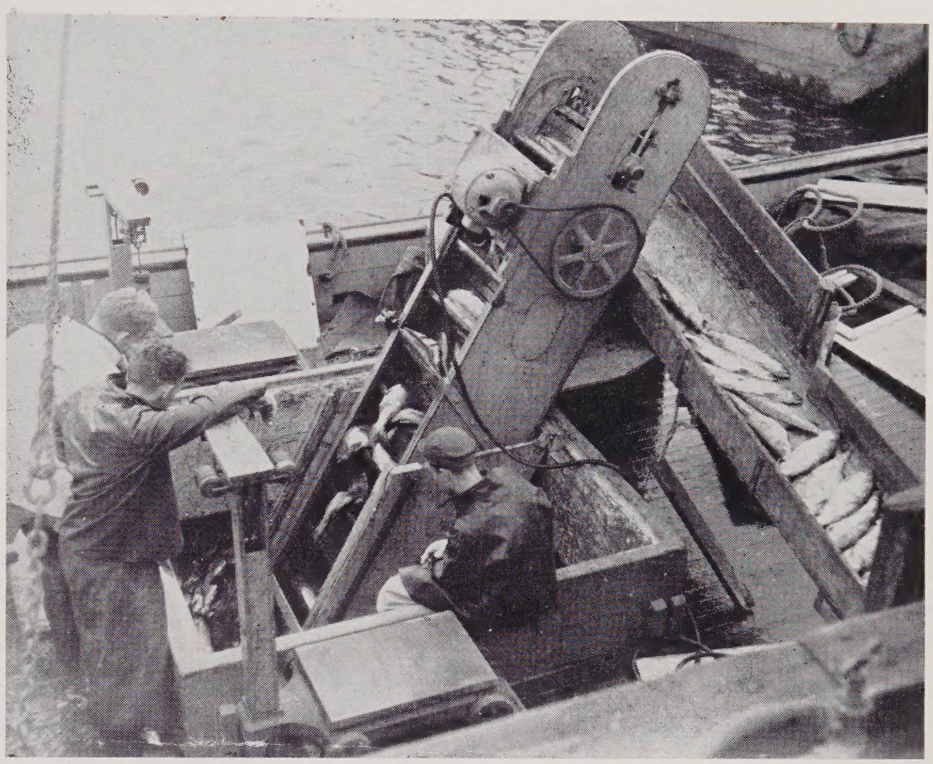
PUGET SOUND SALMON CATCHES FAIR

CRPA enjoyed a fair production season at its Puget Sound cannery at Bellingham this year. In excess of 80,000 cases of sockeyes, pinks, and silvers were canned, slightly more than the company pack in 1947 the last comparative year. While no total pack figures for the area are available to date it is estimated that the total American side pack was probably a little less than in 1947. Fish were scattered more than usual and no unusually large catches were made. The fishing operations started late in July and continued until early October. Chum fishing was halted by a fishermen's strike in October.

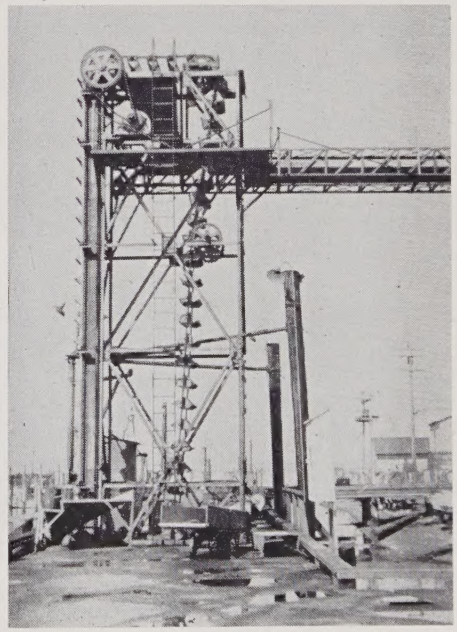
Canadian fishermen operating efficient purse seiners off the cape took a larger share of the pack than usual according to estimates made by the American operators. The fishing fleet in operation was a little larger than in 1947 which is given as a reason for the smaller individual catches.

Vice-President William Wootten took direct charge of operations during the fishing season with James Doran in charge of the cannery operations as superintendent and Verne Larson as foreman.

UNLOADING PINK SALMON



Pictured above is a portable elevator discharging pink salmon from the hold of the tender Vermont at CRPA's cannery at Bellingham, Wn., on Puget Sound. After coming from the hold the fish slide to another elevator, pictured below, which carries them high above the dock to a flume which takes them into the cannery building.



Memoriam

Albert Urho Paldanius, for 34 years with CRPA died in his sleep Thursday, September 22. He had suffered with a heart ailment for about six months. During the past seven years he had been foreman of Occident Station in this city. Paldanius was born in 1894 in this city, received his education here and at a school for mechanics in Portland. He went to work for CRPA as a machinist in 1915 and continued in the employ of the company up until the time of his death except for service in France in World War I. He was married in 1932 to Mrs. Hariette Simonsen, who survives him. He was a member of the First Lutheran Church and Local No. 26 of the Machinists Union.

"Abbie," as he was best known, will be sincerely mourned by his fellow workers and associates in the company and by the many fishermen with whom he had daily contact.

Memoriam

Edward Lyle Morris, 54, for many years cannery foreman in CRPA's Alaska operations died October 2 of a heart ailment. Mr. Morris was born in Youngsville, Pennsylvania. In 1921 he was married to Ellen Holton at Ellensburg. They established their home at Seattle. Several years later they moved to Astoria. Mr. Morris was employed by CRPA in 1924 as a machinist and maintained his connection with the company until the time of his death. He was a past master of Temple Lodge No. 7, A F & A M, a member of Al Kader Shrine, Portland; and of the Machinist Union. He is survived by his his widow and a son Edward Lyle Morris, Jr. of Warrenton, Oregon; and several other relatives.

Mr. Morris played an important role in the company's Alaska operations. He was extremely successful in his handling of cannery crews and his long experience and mechanical knowledge will be greatly missed by his associates.

Fisheries Topic at Astoria Meet on Basin Program

The Columbia Basin Inter-Agency Council, composed of representatives of the various government agencies engaged in the development of the Columbia River Basin, and the governors of the Northwest States met in Astoria, October 12, with the problems of the Columbia River Salmon Fishery as the theme for discussion at the public meeting held on that day.

Much of the program was devoted to a delineation of provisions for fish passage over McNary Dam, now under construction. Colonel Whipple in charge of the Walla Walla district, U. S. Engineer Corps, and several of his aides, presented a detailed description of the facilities. Col. Whipple stated that they would cost about $14,000,000, and that some millions of dollars of power production would be sacrificed to provide the large volume of water necessary to activate the elaborate system of fishways planned for the structure.

Alvin Anderson, director of the Washington Department of Fisheries, and Arne Suomela, Oregon master fish warden spoke briefly, emphasizing that the so-called Lower River Development Plan, could not be substituted for the loss of major spawning areas that would be destroyed by the erection of many proposed dams on the main threads of the Columbia and Snake Rivers.

One interesting fact brought out in connection with the Lower River Plan, which calls for increasing salmon runs in streams below McNary Dam, was, that despite action of the Washington Legislature in designating these streams as sanctuaries for fish and the refusal of the Oregon Hydroelectric Commission to grant a license for erection of a dam on the Deschutes River, action by the Federal Power Commission to grant such licenses would probably overrule any state action. The city of Tacoma now has an application before the Federal Power Commission for the erection of several dams on the Cowlitz River, and the sponsors of the Deschutes Dam have taken similar action.

T. F. Sandoz, CRPA Executive Vice-President, told the Inter-Agency group the industry was not opposing reasonable development of the basin but felt that all necessary needs for power and reclamation could be met without the sacrifice of the fishery resource.

Enjoying sports fishing for salmon on the Columbia River during August were Mr. and Mrs. Walter A. Sions of Philadelphia. Mr. Sions is head of the Walter A. Sions & Co. brokerage firm of that city. Pictured from left to right above are: Susan Sandoz, daughter of T. F. Sandoz, CRPA's Executive Vice-President; Mrs. Sions; Mrs. Sandoz, Walter Sions, and John McGowan, CRPA Assistant Sales Manager. The insert shows Mrs. Sions climbing onto the dock following the all day trip.

Among the visitors who fished for salmon in the Columbia River during the Astoria Salmon Derby was Congressman Thor Tollefson, of Tacoma, Wn. He is pictured above with a party of friends leaving for a day on the river in the CRPA cruiser "Bumble Bee." Left to right above; Miss Paddy Black; Mrs. Percy Black; Congressman Tollefson; Mrs. Tom Sandoz; Mrs. Tollefson, and Percy Black. Peering out of the doorway to the rear is Tom Sandoz, Executive Vice-President of CRPA; while Jay Hendrickson, General Superintendent for the company is perched on top the cabin. The party had a good day on the river with Tollefson hauling in two salmon.

Shipyard Handles Many Repair Jobs

Repair work kept CRPA's shipyard division busy during the past month. Some 37 fishing craft were on the ways for major and minor repairs. Among the jobs listed were:

Damage repair to tender St. Helens.

Overhaul and rebuilding 43-foot MV Albacore for Fred Cook of Bay Center.

Repair shaft of MV Silver Spray for Elmer Thomas of Seattle.

Repair and painting troller Soupfin.

Rudder repairs to troller Neptune.

Repairs and paint auxiliary scow for Macco Construction Company.

Motor overhaul and deck work on MV Lincoln for Fred Sandness.

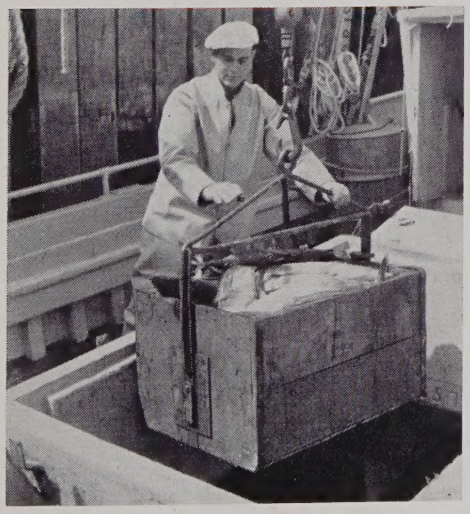
General hull repairs to MV Stampede for Charles Wuori.

FISHY PICTURES

NEW TROLLER

COLUMBIA SALMON

ALBACORE TUNA



FATHER AND SON

Alfred L'Amie, left, Superintendent of CRPA's big Elmore Cannery, and his father Jack L'Amie, former superintendent at Elmore who now just "oversees things." Jack started work for CRPA 32 years ago. Al has been with the company 21 years. (Below) Start of fish boat race Astoria Salmon Derby. (Upper Left) Wally Lebeck's new combination troller and crab boat. (Left) Jackie (upper) and Clarence Demase, Columbia gillnetters delivering a load of salmon. (Lower left) Unloading catch of albacore tuna at Elmore Cannery.

START OF FISH BOAT RACE

MARKET LETTER

CRPA has an answer, or rather several of them, for that Christmas problem.

One is pictured to the right of this article. An assortment of the finest seafoods selected from top quality fishery items, and attractively packaged in a colorful carton that carries the very breath of the ocean.

Contents include one can of tasty Blueback Salmon; one can of white meat Albacore Tuna; one can of light meated Yellowfin Tuna; one can of Dungeness Crab Meat; one oval can of delicately flavored Shad Roe; two cans of Columbia River Chinook Salmon; and two cans of Kippered Sturgeon. This assortment is sold at $5.00 f.o.b. Astoria, the price including a sturdy shipping carton. It can be shipped to any point in the United States for 65 cents.

We also offer another assortment of six cans, including the above selections, minus the shad roe and sturgeon, for $3.00 packed in a similar carton with the same shipping terms.

Our third Christmas idea is pictured at the bottom of this column. Twelve quarter pound cans of kippered sturgeon are packed in this attractive carton. Kippered sturgeon is one of the finest hors d'oeuvres ever used by any host or hostess to tickle the palate during the cocktail hour. A cousin to caviar, for it comes from the same fish, it has the taste, tang, and flavor to stimulate the most jaded appetite.

Here is the answer for the donor looking for something "different" in Christmas gifts.

Dealers may obtain additional information from our Sales Bulletin No. 56 mailed October 31.

Individual orders may be mailed to CRPA, P.O. Box 60, Astoria, Oregon.

Calling at CRPA's head office recently were Ross Bagley, head of Bagley & Co. well known western food brokerage firm, and two of his area managers. Pictured are (left to right) Fred Sandoz, CRPA's Sales Manager; Ross Bagley; Ken Kammerman, Manager of the San Francisco Branch; and Bob Brechbill, Manager of the Los Angeles Branch. Bagley & Co. represent CRPA in Los Angeles, San Francisco, and Salt Lake City. This aggressive and well organized concern has done a fine job of merchandising *Bumble Bee* products in these areas.